

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAKAR 06533 01 OF 02 290800Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 ACDA-07
/104 W

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R 281703Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1137
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BANJUL
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAKAR 6533

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PORG, MO, SS, SG, MR
SUBJECT: SENEGALESE INITIATIVES ON WESTERN SAHARA/
CFAO DEFENSE PACT

REF: (A) DAKAR 6260, (B) STATE 231389, (C) DAKAR 3009,
(D) RABAT 5286, (E) MADRID 7146

SUMMARY. WHILE LOOKING INTO U.S. APC'S (SUPPOSEDLY
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PAGE 02 DAKAR 06533 01 OF 02 290800Z

ON BEHALF OF CFAO DEFENSE ORGANIZATION), SENEGALESE
ARE ALSO SEEKING FRENCH EQUIPMENT TO SECURE SENEGAL
RIVER VALLEY IN FACE OF EXPANDING POLISARIO ACTIVITIES.
PRESIDENT SENGHOR SEES ALGERIA AND LIBYA AS IMPORTANT
REASONS FOR CFAO PACT, BUT THIS CONCERN IS UNDERLAIN
BY BROADER PREOCCUPATION WITH SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN
WEST AFRICA. RABAT IS SEEN AS LIKE-MINDED PARTNER

OF CEAO MEMBERS, AND STEPPED UP SENEGALESE DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH MAURITANIA WOULD COMPLEMENT MOROCCO'S SUPPORT. SENEGALESE CLAIM SENGHOR'S RENEWED CALL FOR SAHARAN REFERENDUM REPRESENTS NO POLICY CHANGE, AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT DAKAR AND NOUAKCHOTT ARE STILL VERY MUCH IN TUNE. SENEGALESE FOREIGN MINISTER CONSIDERS SAHARAN SELF-DETERMINATION "RIDICULOUS" AND INDICATES PROPOSED REFERENDUM INTENDED MERELY AS PLOY TO LEGITIMIZE EXISTING DIVISION. DAKAR PRESS SEES MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN SUPPORT FOR SENEGALESE MEDIATION, BUT IS UNSURE OF ALGERIAN ATTITUDE. END SUMMARY.

1. FRENCH AMBASSADOR WIBAUX, WHO RETURNED DAKAR SEPTEMBER 25 FROM PARIS, TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP WAS TO LOOK INTO POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING PANHARD AML ARMORED CARS FOR SENEGAL. HE SAID SENEGALESE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION IN MAURITANIA, AND SOUGHT ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT TO ENSURE SECURITY OF SENEGAL RIVER VALLEY, POSSIBLY INCLUDING SENEGALESE ROLE ON NORTH BANK TO REINFORCE MAURITANIANS. SENEGALESE WANTED VEHICLES URGENTLY. UNFORTUNATELY, WIBAUX SAID, PANHARD COULD NOT FILL REQUIREMENT BECAUSE OF TWO YEARS OF BACK ORDERS AND FRENCH MILITARY HAD NOT AGREED TO SUPPLY SENEGALESE FROM
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PAGE 03 DAKAR 06533 01 OF 02 290800Z

ITS OWN EQUIPMENT. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT POSSIBLE SUPPLY FROM FRENCH ARMY NOT YET FORECLOSED.

2. THERE IS STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT OVERTURES TO FRENCH FOR PANHARD AML VEHICLES AND INQUIRIES TO CADILLAC CONCERNING V-150 APC'S (REF B) SPRANG FROM SAME IMPULSE. AS NOTED REF B, PRESIDENT SENGHOR HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THREATS HE PERCEIVES TO OTHER WEST AFRICAN STATES FROM ALGERIA AND LIBYA WERE A MAJOR CONSIDERATION IN FORMING CEAO DEFENSE PACT (DAKAR 4639, 4983, 6343). HOWEVER, LIBYANS AND ALGERIANS CONSTITUTE ONLY ONE FACET OF CHALLENGES SEEN BY SENEGAL, AND CEAO PACT REPRESENTS ONLY PARTIAL RESPONSE. SENEGALESE INITIATIVE IN ENGINEERING RESOLUTION AT LIBREVILLE OAU SUMMIT OPPOSING EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE IN AFRICA REFLECTS

SENGHOR'S BROADER CONCERNS OVER SOVIET INFLUENCE AND INTERESTS IN AFRICA, PARTICULARLY IN STATES SURROUNDING SENEGAL. CONCERN OVER SOVIET ACTIVITIES IS UNQUESTIONABLY ANOTHER MAJOR THEME UNDERLYING

SENEGAL'S STRONG COMMITMENT TO CEAO DEFENSE AND
NON-AGGRESSION PACT.

3. IN VIEW OF MOROCCO'S ROLE, WARMLY APPLAUDED BY
SENEGAL, IN STEMMING SHABA INVASION, AND HELPING RE-
SIST ALGERIAN-SPONSORED INSURGENCY IN WESTERN
SAHARA, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SENEGAL VIEWS MOROCCO
AS LIKE-MINDED SILENT PARTNER OF CEAO PACT OFFERING
POTENTIAL VALUABLE SOURCE OF TRAINING AND OTHER
SUPPORT. IN THIS CONTEXT, ANY SENEGALESE CONCERN
OVER MOUNTING MOROCCAN INFLUENCE IN MAURITANIA IS
PROBABLY SECONDARY CONSIDERATION. FRENCH ENVOY
INTERPRETS SENEGALESE ARMORED CAR INQUIRIES
AS EVIDENCE THAT SENEGAL PREPARED ASSUME COOPERATIVE
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PAGE 04 DAKAR 06533 01 OF 02 290800Z

DEFENSE EFFORT IN SOUTHERN MAURITANIA DESIGNED TO
COMPLEMENT MOROCCAN ROLE FURTHER NORTH. SENEGALESE
PREPAREDNESS FOR BILATERAL DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH
MAURITANIA IS PUBLICLY STATED POLICY (REF C).

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PAGE 01 DAKAR 06533 02 OF 02 290812Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 DAKAR 6533

5. AS REPORTED REFS A AND D, SENEGALESE ARE MAKING ARGUMENT THAT SENGHOR'S RENEWED ESPOUSAL OF SAHARAN REFERENDUM REPRESENTS NO DEPARTURE IN PRINCIPLE FROM PAST SENEGALESE SUPPORT FOR UN RESOLUTION FAVORED BY MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA WHICH ENVISAGED CONSULTATION OF POPULATION. SENEGALESE FOREIGN MINISTER SECK TOLD AMBASSADOR BETWEEN HIS TWO MOST RECENT TRIPS TO RABAT THAT MOROCCANS INITIALLY WERE ANNOYED AT SENGHOR'S CALL FOR REFERENDUM, BUT SECK CLAIMED
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PAGE 02 DAKAR 06533 02 OF 02 290812Z

HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE THEM THAT SENEGAL WAS BEING FULLY CONSISTENT WITH PAST POLICY. SECK SAID SENEGAL SOUGHT NO CHANGE IN STATUS QUO, BUT WAS CONCERNED OVER APPEARANCES. SENGHOR, HE SAID, WANTED WORLD COMMUNITY TO HAVE REASON TO ACCEPT PRESENT DIVISION OF WESTERN SAHARA AS LEGAL. SECK FELT MOROCCANS HAD ACCEPTED SENEGALESE POSITION AFTER HIS PRESENTATION.

6. SECK SAID HE CONSIDERED IDEA OF SELF-DETERMINATION BY MINUSCULE SAHARAN POPULATION RIDICULOUS, AND ARGUED THAT KEY ISSUE WAS ALGERIAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING ATLANTIC PORT, JUST AS SOVIETS HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT MEDITERRANEAN OUTLET. ALGERIANS, SECK CONCLUDED, WANT TO OUTFLANK AND STRANGLE MOROCCANS, WHILE DOMINATING SAHELIAN PEOPLES TO THE SOUTH.

7. MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR MOKTAR ASSURED AMBASSADOR LATE LAST WEEK THAT HIS COUNTRY WELCOMED ANY SUGGESTIONS ON REDUCING TENSIONS IN REGION AND FELT SENEGAL TO BE IN LINE WITH BASIC MAURITANIAN PRINCIPLE THAT REUNIFICATION OF MAURITANIA AND SOUTHERN EX-SPANISH SAHARA IS IRREVERSIBLE. HE SAID FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS HAD LEFT DAKAR COMPLETELY SATISFIED AFTER RECENT VISIT AND MAURITANIA CONTINUED TO HAVE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN SENGHOR'S SUPPORT. GAMBIAN DIPLOMAT CORROBORATED THIS VIEW IN SEPTEMBER 27 REMARK TO

EMBOFF THAT BANJUL WAS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM DAKAR TO SUPPORT "MAURITANIAN POSITION." (HE SAID GAMBIA PREFERRED AMBIVALENCE.)

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PAGE 03 DAKAR 06533 02 OF 02 290812Z

8. IT THUS APPEARS TO US THAT CURRENT SENEGALESE INITIATIVES ARE PROCEEDING WITH TACIT MAURITANIAN APPROVAL, IF NOT OUTRIGHT ENCOURAGEMENT AS SUGGESTED BY SPANISH (REF E). SENEGALESE ATTEMPTED EARLIER MEDIATION ON WESTERN SAHARA AND HAVE LEFT NO DOUBT OF THEIR PREPAREDNESS TO RESUME EFFORT IF PARTIES DESIRED. AS REPORTED DAKAR 4983, SENEGAL'S DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED LAST JULY TO HELP GET EXTRAORDINARY OAU SUMMIT ON SAHARA POSTPONED WAS INSPIRED BY MAURITANIA. (GAMBIA DIPLOMAT OFFERED INTERESTING EXPLANATION FOR PRESENT SENEGALESE INITIATIVES; HE ARGUED THAT POLISARIO COULD NOW BE SEEN TO BE IN ASCENDANCY AND THEORIZED THAT SENEGAL WAS TRYING TO FORESTALL WHAT HE PREDICTED WOULD BE GROWING INCLINATION BY AFRICAN STATES TO RECOGNIZE POLISARIO.)

9. SEPTEMBER 27 ISSUED OF DAKAR'S SEMI-OFFICIAL LE SOLEIL CARRIED AFP ARTICLE AND FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL BASED ON REPORTS IN MOROCCAN MEDIA ON SENEGALESE MEDIATION EFFORTS ON WESTERN SAHARA. EDITORIAL SALUTED COURAGE OF MAURITANIAN ARMY, NOTED SENEGAL'S CALL FOR CONSULATION OF WESTERN SAHARA PEOPLE UNDER OAU/UN/ARAB LEAGUE AUSPICES, AND CITED "AFFIRMATIVE" RESPONSE BY MOROCCAN PRESS, BUT REMARKED THAT ALGERIAN REACTION NOT YET KNOWN.

10. SENIOR OFFICIAL IN PRESIDENCY CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF ON SEPTEMBER 28 THAT SENEGAL WAS ENGAGED IN MEDIATION EFFORT ON SAHARA, WHICH HE SAID AROSE OUT OF PRESIDENT'S DEEP CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION OF MAURITANIA. HE SAID SENEGALESE AND SAUDI INITIATIVES WERE CONCERTED, WITH BOTH BASED ON FRATERNAL INFLUENCE AND LATTER REINFORCED BY FINANCIAL LEVERAGE.
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Message Attributes

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